

In the aftermath of the terrible casualties caused by poison gas in World War I, the Geneva Protocol banned the use in war of chemical and biological weapons.

More recently, the international community has worked to build on this achievement. The 1972 Biological Weapons Convention (BWC) banned the development, production, and possession of biological and toxin weapons, and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) did the same for chemical weapons. Today, 135 countries are parties to the CWC, and 143 are parties to the BWC. The United States has ratified both agreements, and our commitment to them has enjoyed strong bipartisan support.

Today, one of the greatest threats to American and global security is the danger that adversary nations or terrorist groups will obtain and use chemical or biological weapons. The international agreements we have reached banning these weapons are a critical component of our effort to protect against this threat.

In my 1998 State of the Union Address, I called on the international community to strengthen the Biological Weapons Convention with a new international inspection system to help detect and deter cheating. Significant progress has been made in Geneva at the Ad Hoc Group of BWC States Parties toward achieving this goal. We urge all participants in this process to work toward the earliest possible conclusion of a BWC Protocol that will further strengthen international security.

On this 75th anniversary of the Geneva Protocol, I call on the countries of the world who have not yet done so to join the Geneva Protocol, CWC, and BWC. I call on all parties to strictly adhere to these agreements and to work to strengthen them. It is more urgent than ever that, true to the words of the Geneva Protocol, their prohibitions “shall be universally accepted . . . binding alike the conscience and the practice of nations.”

### **Statement on the Ethiopia-Eritrea Cease-Fire Agreement**

*June 18, 2000*

Today in Algiers, Ethiopia and Eritrea signed an agreement to cease hostilities. This

is a breakthrough which can and should end the tragic conflict in the Horn of Africa. It can and should permit these two countries to realize their potential in peace, instead of squandering it in war.

I commend the Organization of African Unity, and especially its chair, Algerian President Abdelaziz Bouteflika, for leading the negotiation of this agreement. I am grateful to my envoy, former National Security Adviser Anthony Lake, to Assistant Secretary of State Susan Rice, and to my senior adviser on African affairs, Gayle Smith, for their tireless pursuit of a peaceful resolution to this conflict. The United States has supported the OAU in this effort, and we will continue to do so. I have asked Tony Lake to return to Algiers to work with the OAU as we enter the next round of negotiations.

I hope this commitment by Ethiopia and Eritrea to stop the fighting also signals their commitment to build the peace. I urge them to use the next round of talks to produce a final, comprehensive, lasting agreement, so they can get on with the work of pursuing democracy and development for their people. Ethiopia and Eritrea are America's friends. If they are ready to take the next step, we and our partners in the international community will walk with them.

### **Memorandum on Suspension of Limitations Under the Jerusalem Embassy Act**

*June 16, 2000*

*Presidential Determination No. 2000-24*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* Suspension of Limitations Under the Jerusalem Embassy Act

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 7(a) of the Jerusalem Embassy Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-45) (the “Act”), I hereby determine that it is necessary to protect the national security interests of the United States to suspend for a period of 6 months the limitations set forth in sections 3(b) and 7(b) of the Act.

You are hereby authorized and directed to transmit this determination to the Congress,

accompanied by a report in accordance with section 7(a) of the Act, and to publish the determination in the *Federal Register*.

This suspension shall take effect after transmission of this determination and report to the Congress.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., June 21, 2000]

NOTE: This memorandum was published in the *Federal Register* on June 22 and was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 19.

**Remarks at a Southwest Voter  
Registration Education Project  
Reception in Houston, Texas**

*June 19, 2000*

Thank you very, very much. Well, I think Representative Noriega did his family proud, don't you? I thought it was great. Thank you. [Applause]

I would like to thank all of you who are here, including the folks behind me: my good friend Bill White; and my long-time friend Representative Al Edwards; and Carlos Truan, whom I've known for nearly 30 years. And Antonio Gonzalez, thank you very much. And Billie Carr is still working her cell phone after all these years. [Laughter] Tell whoever it is I said hello, Billie. [Laughter] I love this.

I want to thank Representative Sheila Jackson Lee for being here. And Mickey Ibarra, who is my special assistant, who works with State and local government around the country; I thank him for coming down here, along with Steve Ricchetti, my Deputy Chief of Staff.

I'm delighted to be with Southwest Voter Registration Project, and I want to thank you for all the work that you have done with me and the Vice President over the years, the work you have done to advance democracy, to bring Latino voters into the process, to promote education and economic development.

I also appreciate the solidarity you have shown with others who also deserve to be empowered and to have a full portion of the American dream. And I want to acknowledge, again, Representative Al Edwards, who

is here, because today is June 19th, which is known in the African-American community in the South as "Juneteenth." It's the holiday that celebrates the emancipation of the slaves in Texas.

And for those of you who don't know, basically, Abraham Lincoln, in what is now the Lincoln Bedroom, signed the Emancipation Proclamation in September of 1862. It became effective January 1, 1863. But most of the slaves who were freed did not find out until after the Civil War, because the proclamation ran to the States that had seceded. And formal notice came on June 19th, in Texas, and it became known as Juneteenth. In the western part of the southern States, it's still not uncommon to see these "Juneteenth" celebrations all across the South, particularly in little towns who have family ties going back to that period. And Al made it a holiday in Texas. We congratulate him. Thank you, old friend.

And let me sort of pivot off of that to say that this day should be a day for rejoicing but also for reflection, and for reminding ourselves that there's still a lot of hardship out there and still a lot of discrimination against people because of their race or their sexual orientation or something else that makes them different, and therefore makes other people afraid of them, or believe that they can look down on them and do things that aren't right.

On the way in here, I met with Louvon Harris and Darrell Verrett, the sister and the nephew of James Byrd. They're right here. Stand up. [Applause] It was 2 years ago this month that James Byrd was killed here in Texas, in a heinous act that shocked Americans in every corner of the country, including all the good people of Texas. It reminds us that crimes that are motivated by hate really are fundamentally different and, I believe, should be treated differently under the law.

In the Federal Government we have Federal hate crimes legislation on the books that I believe should be stronger. But we have prosecuted a number of the cases. We have substantially increased the number of FBI agents working them; we have formed local hate crimes working groups; and for 3 years we've tried to pass a stronger Federal bill